

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, from May 24, 1878, to May 26, 1878, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. May 2nd. (?) 1878. My dear Mrs. Bell:

Alec has told you of his baby, now I must tell you of mine. Alec said he didn't know much about her good looks, and I fear I must confess the little one is not yet a beauty, but her Grandmamma says she will be soon, and there are times when I think her lovely. She is such a little black thing, with lovely silky black hair, dark eyes that look more and more blue each day, prettily shaped mouth, and very very brown skin. I am afraid she has been too much exposed to the sun sometime or other before she came to us it looks so like tan. But all who have seen her say that bye and bye she will be a great fair baby with yellow hair and big blue eyes. I am so disgusted, they say she is like Alec around the eyes and forehead and I had set my heart on having her inherit his black eyes and dark curly hair. Mamma says she is as lovely as she can be so good-natured, but I suppose it is rather early to decide on her character. Poor little thing to think she is two weeks and two days old and still nameless. Alec says he is liable to a fine and imprisonment for not registering his daughter's birth and daily threatens to go off and register her as "Shebaba Jemima #Correction by A. G. B.) ." There is one name we all like very much but alas Alec is anxious the middle name should be Hubbard and we none of us want that. I hope you will be able to read this for I write in Mr. Bell's favorite position, on my back on the sofa, and I cannot say I find it as natural a position to me as the usual one. I have been up and dressed for two days now, the first day I walked down stairs helped by Alec, but the doctor did not like it and was so indignant at hearing that Alec could not carry his wife, that Alec insisted on carrying me upstairs that night and has done so ever since. I am quite weak still, but expect to be about the house again next week. It is so funny having a little wee baby of my own, it does not seem as if it could be mine. If you could only see 2 Alec with

Library of Congress

his baby in his arms, he is at once so fond of it and yet so afraid of the poor little thing, and he hardly knows how to hold it. But he is much interested to see that all its organs of speech and sight and hearing are perfect and in verifying Darwin's observations on his own children. Alec's next choice of a name for baby is "Darwinia". He took Mamma to Westminster Abbey yesterday to hear Max Muller and learned from him the two names Adita and Greta one of which he said meant "God", hardly a proper name for a little girl.

My sister is beginning to improve slowly, The doctor says she is certainly better, but we must make up our minds to have her an invalid for a long time to come, and with constant and unceasing care she may be quite well again. She is bright and hopeful herself and with baby's help the house seems cheerful again. The doctor says as soon as the hot weather comes on as must take her to some high dry place remote from the seashore, and we are accordingly studying guide books and maps and also the newspapers for baby is awake and wants her supper.

Thursday May 25th. I must finish my letter left unfinished last Friday now or it will never go. It has been lying around the room and Mamma and Alec have taken the liberty of correcting one or two mistakes.

Our little girl is at last named, Elsie May, I hope you and Mr. Bell will like it. If you were not so far off I should have written to ask your permission to give her the name of Elsie which Alec says is another and a Scotch form for "Eliza". I wanted some remembrance of you in this little ones name and May comes from my name and the Month in which she was born. I suppose Alec sent you one of the papers giving an account of his lecture in Greenock. He was much pleased with his reception there, and the audience was a most unusual one for the season of the year. Alec is very busy constantly experimenting, but is much hindered by the slowness of the workmen who make his instruments. He is impatient to get home again 3 if only to be where he can have his ideas quickly and intelligently put into form. But it is of course a serious matter travelling with a baby and beside my sister

Library of Congress

will not be able to cross the ocean for sometime so we cannot hope to be home very soon.
Our house too is engaged until late in the Autumn.

It is bedtime now and I must say Goodnight, with love to you Mr. Bell and the Misses Symonds.

Affectionately, your daughter, Mabel.